

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 03017 291219Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 3017

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR JO SY XF
SUBJECT: ABDUL HAMID SHARAF'S VISIT TO ASAD MAY 26

1. MAY 28 I SPOKE WITH KING, SHARAF AND ANOTHER
SOURCE VERY CLOSE TO PALACE ABOUT SHARAF'S RECENT
VISIT TO SYRIA TO SEE ASAD.

2. KING TOLD ME THAT ASAD INDICATED SOME CONCERN
THAT ARABS MAKE NO MORE CONCESSIONS. ASAD CLEARLY
REFERRING TO PRESENTLY FORTHCOMING ARAB PUBLIC
STANCE AND FLEXIBILITY IN CONTEXT OF SADAT-LED PEACE OFFENSIVE.
ASAD CLAIMED IT IS HUMILIATING FOR
ARABS TO CONTINUE TO MAKE SUCH EFFORTS. KING
SAID HE BELIEVES ON CONTRARY. THAT ASAD IS BEING NARROW
MINDED AND FOOLISH ON THIS ISSUE. ARABS MUST CONTINUE TO PUT
FORWARD MODERATE AND HELPFUL VIEWS. IN THIS
CONTEXT KING REPLIED TO ME THAT DOUBTS HE HELD
BEFORE HIS WASHINGTON VISIT ABOUT
THE STAYING POWER AND DETERMINATION OF
THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAD ALL DISAPPEARED DURING
VISIT. HE SAID HE NOW HAS ABSOLUTELY NO FEARS ON
THIS SCORE AND IS CONVINCED THAT THE PRESIDENT IS
DETERMINED TO STAY THE COURSE IN PURSUIT OF PEACE

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IN THE AREA WITH THE ARABS THE ISRAELIS AND
AMERICAN PUBLIC.

3. SHARIF DESCRIBED FOR ME HIS EARLIER VISIT TO
GENEVA IN WHICH HE SAID HE MET WITH ASAD FOR OVER
THREE HOURS PRIOR TO PRESIDENTS CARTERS MEETING AND
FILLED IN THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT ON THE DETAILS OF KING

HUSSEINS WASHINGTON VISIT. SHARAF HAD PREDICTED THAT ASAD WOULD LIKE PRESIDENT CARTER AND ENCOURAGED ASAD TO BE EXPANSIVE AND DETAILED IN THIS POSOTION AND DISCUSSIONS.

4. DURING SHARAF'S MAY 26 VISIT ASAD HAD INDICATED HIS VERY FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE GENEVA DISCUSSIONS. SHARAF DID NOT MENTION POINTS ABOUT FUTURE ARAB STANCE BUT DID INDICATE THAT ISSUES HAD BEEN FRANKLY DISCUSSED BETWEEN HIMSELF AND ASAD.

5. SHARAF SAID HE HAD ALSO MENTIONED HIS OWN PERSONAL DISPLEASURE OVER THE FACT THAT JORDAN HAD BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE RECENT RIYADH SUMMIT MEETING HELD BY SAUDI ARABIANS. ASAD HAD APOLOGIZED FOR ATTENDING WITHOUT JORDAN SAYING HE HAD ONLY DECIDED TO DO SO AT THE LAST MINUTE AND IN ORDER NOT TO SENSITIZE KING KHALID WHO TOOK AFFRONT TO LEADERS WHO DID NOT ACCEPT HIS INVITATIONS. ASAD HAD CLAIMED TO SHARAF THAT RIYADHMEETING HAD ACCOMPLISHED VERY LITTLE AND HAD ONLY REVIEWED AREA SITUATION. SHARAF BELIEVES JORDAN WAS EXCLUDED IN ORDER TO AVOID GROUP HAVING ALSO TO INVITE PLO (WHICH WOULD STALEMATE FRANK DISCUSSIONS) AND PERHAPS BECAUSE GROUP WISHED TO PLAN FUTURE STEPS WITHOUT HAVING EITHER PLO OR JORDANIANS AT MEETING. SHARAF IS CLEARLY CONCERNED AND SAID HE EXPECTS TO MAKE THIS CONCERN CLEAR TO SAUDIS AS HE DID TO ASAD. NOT SURPRISINGLY
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A FEW DAYS AGO ZAID RIFAI MADE THE SAME POINTS TO ME ABOUT HIS CONCERN OVER JORDANS BEING LEFT OUT OF CURRENT INTER-ARAB PLANNING PROCESS. THE KING WHOM I ASKED ABOUT RIYADH MEETING WAS SHORT ON DETAILS AND CLEARLY DID NOT WISH TO DISUCSS IT AT LENGTH.

6. A FEW DAYS AGO VERY RELIABLE SOURCE IN THE PALACE TOLD ME THAT PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF SHARAF'S TRIP TO DAMASCUS WAS ON BEHALF OF DANY CHAMOUN IN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE SYRIANS TO CEASE EFFORTS (REAL OR IMAGINED) TO DO AWAY WITH THE ELDER CHAMOUN. KING HAS HAD CONTACTED ASAD ON THIS INDIRECTLY SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE SOURCE DID NOT KNOW THE RESULTS OF SHARAF ENTREATIES ONLY THAT CHAMOUNS HAVE NOT BEEN CONVINCED BY PREVIOUS SYRIAN DENIALS OF PROMISED OR ALLEGED PLOTS TO DO IN ELDER CHAMOUN. JORDANIANS SEEM TO BE LOSING THEIR PAST STRONG BEFORE FOR ELDER CHAMOUN AND SAY THEY MADE EFFORTS WITH SYRIANS TO

TRY TO PROTECT DANY WITH WHOM THEY MAINTAIN REGULAR
AND FREQUENT CONTACT.
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